



MEPD and Texas Works Bulletin 20-07

Date: April 8, 2020

To: Eligibility Services Supervisors and Staff
Program Managers
Regional Directors
Regional Attorneys
Hearings Officers

From: Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy
State Office 2115

Subject: COVID-19 Policy Updates #4

The information in this bulletin provides temporary guidance regarding policies and procedures for processing case actions during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications should no longer be used for processing case actions and determining eligibility. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures.

Active bulletins are posted on the following websites:

- [Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook \(MEPDH\)](https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/mepd/policy-bulletins>;
- [Texas Works Handbook \(TWH\)](http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins) at <http://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/texas-works-bulletins>.

COVID-19 Policy Updates #4

Background

On March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of disaster for all counties in Texas due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. On the same date, President Donald J. Trump declared a national emergency. Guidance from state and federal leaders emphasize the need for social distancing and limiting contact with others during this time. In light of this guidance, HHSC is providing the following policy clarifications and temporary changes to eligibility policies to accommodate processing of case actions during this emergency period.

1. Emergency Allotment Supplement

SNAP

COVID-19 Policy Information

HHSC has been granted approval from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to issue April and May 2020 emergency allotment (EA) supplements to participating Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) households. Households who are approved for SNAP in April 2020 and May 2020 will automatically be issued supplements that will bring the household up to the maximum monthly allotment for the household's size.

All EA supplements will be automatically issued on the SNAP household's existing EBT card. SNAP households do not need to take any action to receive EA supplements.

Note: SNAP households that already receive the maximum monthly allotment for their household size are not eligible for EA supplements.

Starting April 9, 2020, EA supplements for April will be issued on a randomized staggered schedule. The issuance of April EA supplements for active SNAP households are expected to be completed by April 15, 2020. Households who are determined eligible for SNAP after April 15, 2020, including households who receive a prorated allotment, will be issued their supplement by the end of April.

TIERS will add the following case comment "COVID-19 SNAP supplements issued" for a case where the EA supplement was issued. HHSC will not be sending a notice to households regarding the EA supplement.

May EA benefits will be issued to active SNAP households by May 15, 2020. Additionally, similar to applicants certified in April, households who are determined

eligible for SNAP after May 15, 2020, will receive their May EA supplements before the end of May.

Automation

April EA supplements for active SNAP households are expected to be issued between April 9, 2020, and April 15, 2020. May EA benefits will be issued to active SNAP households by May 15, 2020. Any newly certified SNAP households will be issued EA supplements before the end of the applicable benefit month.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

Handbook updates are not required.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective with the release of this bulletin. Staff will be notified when the COVID-19 policy and clarifications no longer apply.